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264 to organize the supply of eating-baskets sent to the young men's shelter. There may be two one day and twelve another.[1] It does not matter. Every mother-in-law sends just whenever she has time and supplies, so that the men of the village have a varying amount to eat from day to day. The regularity of the diet is thus directly affected by the symbolic use of offerings of cooked food.

*The Cooking Team.*

252 476 602 We have turned for a moment from our main subject, the joint preparation of food, but it will be seen that the system of inter-dependent matrilocal households provides two units of economic co-operation, the women's and the men's. The former look for relish, fetch firewood, pound, grind, and cook together, and usually do their gardening work in twos and threes. The latter clear the bush for gardens jointly and, more rarely, hoe in common. But it is important to remember that the ties of kinship between the women's group are stronger than those between men. The women who work together are usually the old grandmother, her married daughter, her unmarried girls and adolescent granddaughters, besides other female relatives temporarily with her. The team may not be as large, of course. Every household in the village does not belong to a 'big house'. There may be only two or three individual families linked together, especially in a new village. But the basis of co-operation is the same in each case—mother and daughter, grandmother and granddaughter, sister and sister,[2] &c., and it is the matrilocal family pattern which will be ultimately reproduced as a normal process of development. So much is this the case [595] that the wives of a polygamist never cook together, but each works with her own mother, sister, or any other female relatives who may happen to be in the village.[3] It is the solidarity and common activities of groups of the mother-daughter type which form the basis of the Bemba village. A man's own female relatives, his mother and sister, may be dependent on him, but they do not form part of the cooking unit. In-law taboos prevent a woman [606 ●607] from co-operating closely with her mother-in-law, and her relations with her sister-in-law are usually constrained, if not hostile.

[1] Cf. p. 183. [2] Using these terms in the classificatory sense.

[3] The wives of a chief are often an exception in this respect. They seem to have accepted the status of polygamy more completely than the wives of commoners, and the heavy work involved in cooking for tribute labour makes it almost necessary for them to co-operate.

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A man helps his sister and her children by cutting them gardens or giving them uncooked food, but not by inviting them to share in the daily meals.

The men's group based on the matrilocal system is smaller and less closely knit. Between the sons-in-law attached to one household there is a feeling of close friendship and familiarity. These young men eat and work together, and the term *Ciufi munandi*, 'the man who married with me', or into the same family, is one of affection and good fellowship. There are no taboos between a man and his wife's sisters. He laughs and jokes with them because he may one day marry them, and he works in their gardens if they need help. But the young husbands often come from different villages and clans, and will want, as soon as they can, to have gardens of their own and perhaps to take their wives back to their villages. In the same way there may be co-operation from time to time between an old man and one of his own young kinsmen, such as his grandson or maternal nephew, but these also come and go, marry in other villages, and get work with Europeans. This group does not remain in close association throughout life as do the women of the matrilocal group, whether the latter remain in the same village or not.[1] This fact has important bearings at the present time. Though the unit of male labour is often non-existent, with the absence of so many of the men at the mines, the domestic and gardening economy of the women remains for the most part intact, and there seems no doubt that women deserted for months or even years by their husbands are more happily placed in a matrilocal community than in a patrilocal one.[2]

*The Value of the Cooking Team.*

The practical results of this type of domestic economics should be considered, since it is apparently one that is likely to change

[1] One legal case concerned a young married woman, one of six sisters, real or classificatory, who had lived in the same village and worked so happily together that when her husband removed her to his own village after the necessary years of service, she could not bear to live away from her family. The contrast between the cheerful female group in her own village and her relative isolation in her husband's community was too great. She ran back home for the third time during my stay at the village (Pambalasa, 1930). Divorce was the final result. Such a case is an extreme instance of the female solidarity which is so marked in a matrilocal tribe of this kind.

[2] Dr. Margaret Read confirms this on the basis of a comparative study between the patrilocal Ngoni and the matrilocal Chewa of Nyasaland.

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262 592 was only one young woman able and willing to search for relish and to do much grinding. Nakulu Marya was crippled with age and rheumatism, and a burden on the group rather than a help. NaMarya herself was elderly, frail, querulous, and constantly anxious. She was a poor organizer and lacked social support in the village into which she had married as an inherited wife, and 607 she had no relatives of her own except her old mother. She was criticized by the women of Kasaka's family, and as always happens 262 592 in such a situation, rumour had begun to saddle her with some of the misfortunes which had recently fallen on the village.[1] The difficult relationship between a man's wife and his sister, inevitable in a matrilineal community, was intensified by the clash of temperaments between NaMarya, who was weak and timid in character, although technically the senior as the headman's wife, and NaMukonda (B2), domineering, efficient, and sharp-tongued, with a large family of sons and daughters in [579] support. Jealousy, concealed beneath the surface, broke out violently from time to time, culminating in a fight between the two women at a beer-drink which sent NaMarya off for two days to sleep in the grass shelter near her garden with her old mother because she feared that 'her heart would get hot again' and she might again abuse her husband's sister—a bad breach of Bemba kinship sentiment.

262 592 Thus, both the temperamental peculiarities and the social position of NaMarya made catering a burdensome task for her at a time when relish was hard to find, and as the wife of a headman she had to dispense additional hospitality. The heads of the other matrilocal groups, e.g. the sisters NaMukonda and NaKabanda (B2 and C2), would help each other when they were rushed with work, but NaMarya could only rely on her daughter Kampamba (A6), a quiet, steady girl who took her full share of the work when present, but who gardened four days out of twenty and went fishing, looking for relish, or carried meat to Shiwa Dandu for a European employer on five days. Kapea, the 14-year-old girl, was intelligent and lively, but did not work. NaMarya was afraid to scold her for a characteristic reason—she

[1] e.g. people said that the failure of the hunting ordeal at the founding of the village had been due to NaMarya. She had not remained indoors all day as behoved a headman's wife on such an occasion, but had gone abroad visiting. They complained that she did not bother herself (ukusakamanya) about the village. Charges of witchcraft frequently result from a situation of this kind.